

- 1 1. A method, comprising:
2 accessing a license profile associated with a protectable content, the license profile
3 identifying attributes affecting at least one operation of the protectable content;
4 accessing an identifier representing the protectable content; and
5 based, at least in part, on the license profile and protectable content identifier,
6 determining an authenticity of a license associated with the protectable content.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the protectable content corresponds to a software
2 element.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the software element is compliant with an open source
2 definition.
- 1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the attributes correspond to at least one of a software
2 code format, a software naming convention, a software code annotation, a warranty, a reverse-
3 engineering activity, a patent litigation activity, a standards body, a violation of intellectual
4 property rights, and a textual description of at least one aspect of the protectable content.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the protectable content corresponds to at least one of a
2 multimedia presentation, a video segment, an audio segment, a textual representation, a work of
3 art, a visual representation, a technological know-how, a business know-how, and a contract
4 right.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 executing, on behalf of an owner of the protectable content, a hash algorithm to form the
3 protectable content identifier.

1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
2 forming, on behalf of the owner of the protectable content, the license profile based on
3 the license associated with the protectable content.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 validating, by an entity not associated with the owner of the protectable content, the
3 license profile and the protectable content identifier.

1 9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 receiving a request message to register the license, the request message including indicia
3 pertaining to the protectable content identifier, the license profile, and the owner.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the request message is encrypted and digitally signed.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 accessing indicia identifying an owner of the protectable content;
3 identifying a type of algorithm used to form the protectable content identifier; and
4 based on the license profile, the protectable content identifier, the indicia identifying the
5 owner, and the type of algorithm used to form the protectable content identifier, computing an
6 identifier associated with the license.

1 12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

transmitting the computed license identifier to the owner of the protectable content, the computed license identifier being coupled with the protectable content being distributed to at least one user of the protectable content.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the computed license identifier is encrypted and digitally-signed prior to its transmission to the owner of the protectable content.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
receiving a request message to authenticate the license associated with the protectable content from the at least one user of the protectable content;
comparing the computed license identifier with a corresponding license identifier provided by the at least one user of the protectable content in the request message; and
based on the comparison, providing indicia accessible by the at least one user pertaining to the authenticity of the license.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the indicia pertaining to the authenticity of the license includes at least one of the license, information identifying an owner of the license, information identifying the owner of the protectable content, and an alphanumeric code enabling the at least one operation of the protectable content.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the authenticity of the license associated with the protectable content comprises:
computing an identifier associated with the license based, at least partly, on the license profile and the protectable content identifier;
receiving a request message to authenticate the license associated with the protectable content from at least one user of the protectable content;

7 comparing the computed license identifier with a corresponding license identifier
8 provided by the at least one user of the protectable content in the request message; and
9 based on the comparison, providing indicia accessible by the at least one user pertaining
10 to the authenticity of the license.

1 17. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the attributes are assigned at least one
2 restriction value that specifies particular restrictions pertaining to the protectable content.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the at least one assigned restriction value corresponds
2 to at least one of a prohibition, a requirement, and a nullity.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the at least one assigned restriction value corresponds
2 to at least one of true, false, required, don't care, forbidden, 1, 0, -1, and text.

1 20. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the attributes are assigned at least one
2 use value representing a permissible degree of distribution of the protectable content.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one assigned use value corresponds to at
2 least one of an acquisition, a personal use, a research use, an organizational use, a limited
3 distribution, and an unlimited distribution of at least one aspect of the protectable content.

1 22. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one assigned use value is equivalent to a
2 default use associated with the license.

1 23. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one assigned use value overrides a default
2 use value associated with the license.

1 24. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the attributes are assigned at least one
2 interaction value representing a permissible degree of manipulation of the protectable content.

1 25. The method of claim 24, wherein the at least one assigned interaction value corresponds
2 to at least one of an original element, a modified element, a group of distinct elements, a group
3 of interconnected elements, a group of elements capable of providing a desired functionality, a
4 plurality of interoperable groups of elements capable of providing a plurality of functions, an
5 unrestricted manipulation of elements, and an unrestricted ownership of elements of at least one
6 aspect of the protectable content.

1 26. The method of claim 24, wherein the at least one assigned interaction value is equivalent
2 to a default interaction associated with the license.

1 27. The method of claim 24, wherein the at least one assigned interaction value overrides a
2 default interaction value associated with the license.